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The Application of Auxiliaries in Verb Structures: A Cross linguistic Approach

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ABSTRACT

The paper contains a description of the formal differences and similarities in the structure of English and Ruthenian verb constructions. It can be said that Ruthenian verb constructions are mainly formed synthetically, whereas English verb constructions are mainly formed analytically. The use of auxiliaries in English compensates for the sparseness of flexion. There are five auxiliaries in English verb constructions (BE, DO, HAVE, SHALL, WILL) whereas there is only one auxiliary in Ruthenian (БУИ). Although the author mostly pays attention to the active verb constructions in the study, the passive verb constructions are included as well. The results may serve as a starting point for further contrastive investigations. The results can be used in teaching English in the Ruthenian speaking area and in teaching Ruthenian in the English speaking area as well as in translating both from English into Ruthenian and from Ruthenian into English.

Keywords: English language, Ruthenian language, verb constructions, auxiliary verbs, contrastive approach

Introduction

Generally speaking, the subject of this paper is morphological and syntactic contrastive analysis of English and Ruthenian. Emphasis is placed on the relations prevailing between morphosyntactic components and our attention is paid to the verb phrases in the grammatical systems of the Ruthenian and English languages. Some of the morphosyntactic characteristics of English and Ruthenian languages are visible in simple sentences. For ex. instead of English I write and I love the Ruthenian equivalents are both я пишу, я любим and пишу, любим. Whereas the subject (nouns, pronouns, NPs) expression is compulsory in English, in Ruthenian it is not the case. The concept of the first person singular in the Ruthenian language can be expressed by a noun phrase or by the verb morpheme {м}. This morpho-syntactic difference between the two languages is caused by the loss of flexion in English. If we take into consideration the possibility of changing the order of verbal elements in Ruthenian (for ex. the Ruthenian equivalents for English I wrote are: in main clauses Я писал and Писалсом; in subordinate clauses Кедсомписал) we can distinguish two significant characteristics of the Ruthenian verbal system: the ability of varying

constructions and free order of elements within constructions. On the other hand, the English verbal system is characterized by a greater degree of fixedness.

There are two analytical inflectional verb forms in both languages. According to traditional Ruthenian grammars, they are called the Present and the Perfect:

Present

Япишем

Тыпишеш

Вонпише

Вонапише

Вонопише

Мипишеме

Випишеце

Вонипишу

Perfect

я писал / писалсом

тыписал / писалиши

вонписал

вонаписала

вонописало

миписали / писализме

виписали / писалисце

вониписали

If the subject is not expressed in the Perfect, the presence of the auxiliary *БУЦ*, that is its forms (*сом,ши,зме,сце*) is obligatory.

According to traditional English grammars, the two analytical inflectional verb forms are called the Present Simple Tense and the Simple Past Tense:

Present Simple Tense

I write

you write

he writes

she writes

it writes

we write

you write

they write

Simple Past Tense

I wrote

you wrote

he wrote

she wrote

it wrote

we wrote

you wrote

they wrote

Unlike the Ruthenian forms, the English forms are not synthetic in interrogative and negative sentences. They become analytic and presence of the forms of the auxiliary *DO* – *do/does* or *did* – is obligatory. For ex. *I do not write, Do you write?; I did not write, Did you write?*

On the basis of verb functioning in the verb phrase anglists distinguish two main groups of verbs.

The first group consists of verbs that are called differently: main verbs (Leech & Svartvik, 1988: 242), full verbs (Palmer, 1988: 19; Quirk et al, 1991: 96), lexical verbs (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1998: 26), notional verbs (Nesfield, 1956: 53), and sometimes ordinary (Thomson & Martinet, 1990: 105). For the purposes of this paper the most acceptable term is lexical verbs.

Based on the criteria that were used by H. E. Palmer and F. T. Blendford for anomalous finite verbs and based on four basic transformations used by N. Chomsky, F. R. Palmer introduces four criteria applicable to this type of verbs (Palmer, 1988: 18-25). The first criterion is the inversion with the subject (for ex. *He is coming. Is he coming?*). The second criterion is the ability to appear with the negative particle *not* (for ex. *He is not coming*). The third criterion is the code, i.e. the ability of an auxiliary verb to take the meaning of a lexical verb, enabling absence of a lexical verb (for ex. *I like it and so do they*). The fourth is the emphatic affirmation (for ex. *He has finished them*). Based on these criteria, the following verbs can be treated as auxiliaries: *BE, HAVE, DO, WILL, SHALL, CAN, MAY, MUST, OUGHT TO, DARE, NEED, USED TO*. These verbs are not preceded by the particle *to*. They do not have an imperative form.

The first three verbs - *BE, HAVE* and *DO* - show certain common characteristics:

- a) presence of the inflectional morpheme {s} for the third-person singular (*is, has, does*);
- b) the existence of more than two finite forms (*am, is, are, was, were; have, has, had; do, does, did*);
- (c) the existence of non-finite forms (*be, being, been; have, having*);
- (d) the use with the lexical verbs in which they do not change the meaning of lexical verbs; their function is purely grammatical.

Because of these characteristics *BE, HAVE* and *DO* are called primary auxiliary verbs, and the others – modal auxiliary verbs.

The remaining auxiliary verbs also share some common characteristics:

- a) they do not have formal markers for the third person singular (**cans, *mays*);
- b) they are not found with the morpheme {ing} (**Canning, *maying*);
- (c) they have only finite forms;
- d) they do not have more than two finite forms, if we accept the view that *should, would, could, might* are forms of *SHALL, WILL, CAN, MAY; MUST, OUGHT TO, NEED, DARE, USED TO*, as members of this group have only one finite form;
- (e) they cannot appear together (**He will should see, *He may can come*);
- (f) they all carry meanings that modify the lexical verb in the statement (such as possibility, probability, necessity, permission, etc.)

There are 16 distinguished verb constructions (Palmer, 1988: 31). For the purposes of this paper we present them in the way Palmer does – in the third person singular. Italic letters are used to indicate auxiliaries and bold letters are used to indicate lexical verbs.

1. **takes**
2. **took**
3. *is***taking**
4. *was***taking**
5. *has***taken**
6. *had* **taken**
7. *has been* **taking**
8. *had been* **taking**
9. *is* **taken**
10. *was* **taken**
11. *is being***taken**
12. *was being***taken**
13. *has been***taken**
14. *had been***taken**
15. *has been being***taken**
16. *had been being***taken**

The verb constructions are presented in two sets. The first set of formalized constructions is completely given symbolically. The second set retains only the symbolic representation of the lexical verb.

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. V-s | V-s |
| 2. V-ed | V-ed |
| 3. <i>BE-s</i> + V-ing <i>is</i> + V-ing | |
| 4. <i>BE-ed</i> + V-ing <i>was</i> + V-ing | |
| 5. <i>HAVE-s</i> + V-en <i>has</i> + V-en | |
| 6. <i>HAVE-ed</i> + V-en <i>had</i> + V-en | |
| 7. <i>HAVE-s</i> + <i>BE-en</i> + V-ing <i>has+been</i> + V-ing | |
| 8. <i>HAVE-ed</i> + <i>BE-en</i> + V-ing <i>had+been</i> + V-ing | |
| 9. <i>BE-s</i> + V-en <i>is</i> + V-en | |
| 10. <i>BE-ed</i> + V-en <i>was</i> + V-en | |
| 11. <i>BE-s</i> + <i>BE-ing</i> + V-en <i>is+being</i> + V-en | |
| 12. <i>BE-ed</i> + <i>BE-ing</i> + V-en <i>was+being</i> + V-en | |
| 13. <i>HAVE-s</i> + <i>BE-en</i> + V-en <i>has+been</i> + V-en | |
| 14. <i>HAVE-ed</i> + <i>BE-en</i> + V-en <i>had+been</i> + V-en | |
| 15. <i>HAVE-s</i> + <i>BE-en</i> + <i>BE-ing</i> + V-en <i>has+been+being</i> + V-en | |
| 16. <i>HAVE-ed</i> + <i>BE-en</i> + <i>BE-ing</i> + V-en <i>had+been+being</i> + V-en | |

The auxiliary verb *BE* occurs in constructions 3, 9, 11 (as *BE-s* or *is*), 4, 10, 12 (as *BE-ed* or *was*), 7, 8, 13, 14 (as *BE-en* or *been*), 11, 12, 15, 16 (as *BE-ing* or *being*); in constructions 11, 12, 15, 16 we perceive two forms of the auxiliary verb *BE*. The auxiliary verb *HAVE* occurs in constructions 5, 7, 13, 15 (as *HAVE-s* or *has*), 6, 8, 14, 16 (as *HAVE-ed* or *had*).

The primary auxiliary verb *DO* (its forms *do/does*) is not found in affirmative sentences; it is found in interrogative and negative sentences of the verb construction 1 (**takes** - *does* not **take**, *does* **S take**). The form *did* is found in interrogative and negative sentences of the verb construction 2 (**took** - *did* not **take**, *did* **S take**).

The same number of constructions with the modal auxiliaries can be distinguished (Palmer, 1988: 94).

1/17 will **take**

2/18 would **take**

3/19 will *be***taking**

4/20 would *be***taking**

5/21 will *have***taken**

6/22 would *have* **taken**

7/23 will *have been***taking**

8/24 would *have been***taking**

9/25 will *be***taken**

10/26 would *be***taken**

11/27 will *be being***taken**

12/28 would *be being***taken**

13/29 will *have been***taken**

14/30 would *have been***taken**

15/31 will *have been being* **taken**

16/32 would *have been being***taken**

These verb constructions can be presented in the following two ways:

1/17 Mod- ϕ +**V** Mod+**V**

2/18 Mod-ed+**V** Mod-ed+**V**

3/19 Mod- ϕ +BE- ϕ +**V-ing**Mod+be+**V-ing**
 4/20 Mod-ed+BE- ϕ +**V-ing** Mod-ed+be+**V-ing**
 5/21 Mod- ϕ +HAVE- ϕ +**V-en**Mod+have+**V-en**
 6/22 Mod-ed+HAVE- ϕ +**V-en** Mod-ed+have+**V-en**
 7/23 Mod- ϕ +HAVE- ϕ +BE-en+**V-ing** Mod+have+been+**V-ing**
 8/24 Mod-ed+HAVE- ϕ +BE-en+**V-ing** Mod-ed+have+been+**V-ing**
 9/25 Mod- ϕ +BE- ϕ +**V-en** Mod+be+**V-en**
 10/26 Mod-ed+BE- ϕ +**V-en**Mod-ed+be+**V-en**
 11/27 Mod- ϕ +BE- ϕ +BE-ing+**V-en**Mod+be+being+**V-en**
 12/28 Mod-ed+BE- ϕ +BE-ing+**V-en**Mod-ed+be+being+**V-en**
 13/29 Mod- ϕ +HAVE- ϕ +BE-en+**V-en**Mod+have+been+**V-en**
 14/30 Mod-ed+HAVE- ϕ +BE-en+**V-en**Mod-ed+have+been+**V-en**
 15/31 M- ϕ +HAVE- ϕ +BE-en+BE-ing+**V-en**Mod+have+been+being+**V-en**
 16/32 M-ed+HAVE- ϕ +BE-en+BE-ing+**V-en**Mod-ed+have+been+being+**V-en**

If we separate the third person singular forms as representatives of other forms in a particular paradigm, as we did for verbs in English, the Ruthenian language has the following verb constructions:

1. 1. бере
2. а) брал
- б) брал// бралсом
3. а) булбрал
- б) булбрал// булсомбрал
4. будзебрац
5. а) брани
- б) браниє
6. а) булбрани
- б) булбрани // булсомбрани
7. будзебрани

The first person singular forms have been given behind the two slashes (//) to indicate presence of the auxiliary verb that does not appear in the third person singular form.

The Ruthenian verb constructions are symbolically presented like this:

1. **V-ø**
2. а) **V-л**
 б) **V-л[+БУЦ-м] V-л[+сом]**
3. а) **БУЦ-л+V-лбул+V-л**
 б) **БУЦ-л[+БУЦ-м]+V-л бул[+сом]+V-л**
4. **БУДЗЕ-ø+V-ц** **будзе+V-ц**
5. а) **V-ни**
 б) **V-ни+БУЦ-øV-ни+ε**
6. а) **БУЦ-л+V-нибул+V-ни**
 б) **БУЛ-л[+БУЦ-м]+V-нибул[+сом]+V-ни**
7. **БУДЗЕ-ø+V-нибудзе+V-ни**

The auxiliary verb *БУЦ* is included in the most of the active (2b, 3a, 3b and 4) and the most of the passive constructions (5b, 6a, 6b and 7). There are two forms of the auxiliary verb *БУЦ* in the construction 3b. Construction 1 and the variant constructions (with uttered subject) 2a and 5a are composed of lexical verbs. The constructions with the modal auxiliary *БИ* show even greater degree of variation:

8. а) **бибрац**
 б) **брацби// брацбим**
 в) **брацби// брацбисом**
9. а) **бибрал**
 б) **бралби//бралбим**
 в) **бралби//бралбисом**
10. а) **бибулбрал**
 б) **булбибрал //булбимбрал**
 в) **бралбибул// бралбисомбул**
11. а) **бибуцбрани**
 б) **буцбибрани//буцбимбрани**
 в) **бранибибуц// бранибисомбуц**
12. а) **бибулбрани**
 б) **булбибрани//булбимбрани**
 в) **бранибибул// бранибисомбул**

It should be emphasized that the construction 10 (together with the construction 3) was frequent in the Ruthenian language at the beginning of the twentieth century (Костельник, 1975: 271) but today it can be considered archaic.

8. а) БИ- ϕ +V-ц би+V-ц
 б) V-ц+би- ϕ V-ц+бим
 в) V-ц +БИ- ϕ [+БУЦ-м] V-ц+би+сом
9. а) БИ- ϕ +V-лби+V-л
 б) V-л+би- ϕ V-л+бим
 в) V-л+БИ- ϕ [+БУЦ-м] V-л+би+сом
10. а) БИ- ϕ +БУЦ-л+V-лби+бул+V-л
 б) БУЦ-л+би- ϕ +V-л бул+бим+V-л
 в) V-л+БИ- ϕ [+БУЦ-м]+БУЦ-л V-л+би+сом+бул
11. а) БИ- ϕ +БУЦ- ϕ +V-ни би+буц+V-ни
 б) БУЦ- ϕ +би- ϕ +V-ни буц+бим+V-ни
 в) V-ни+БИ- ϕ [+БУЦ-м]+БУЦ- ϕ V-ни+би[+сом]+буц
12. а) БИ- ϕ +БУЦ-л+V-ни би+бул+V-ни
 б) БУЦ-л+би- ϕ +V-ни бул+бим+V-ни
 в) V-ни+БИ- ϕ [+БУЦ-м]+БУЦ-л V-ни+би[+сом]+бул

According to the diachronic point of view the modal auxiliary verb *БИ* is treated as an aorist form of *БУЦ* (Костельник, 1975: 277), which leads to the conclusion that there exists only the auxiliary *БУЦ* in the constructions with modal auxiliary *БИ*.

With regard to syntactic behavior the English language modal auxiliaries make a special group, and the Ruthenian language has only one modal auxiliary – *БИ*. The Ruthenian equivalents to the English modals are included in the group of lexical verbs in Ruthenian.

There are three primary auxiliary verbs (*BE*, *HAVE*, *DO*) included in the English verb constructions, whereas there is only one primary auxiliary verb (*БУЦ*) in the Ruthenian verb constructions. The maximum number of the forms of primary auxiliaries in the English verb constructions is three, whereas the maximum number of the forms of *БУЦ* in the Ruthenian verb constructions is two.

Conclusion

Using F. R. Palmer's four criteria (inversion with the subject, ability to appear with the negative particle *not*, ability to take the meaning of a lexical verb, emphatic affirmation) the author treats

BE, HAVE, DO, WILL, SHALL, CAN, MAY, MUST, OUGHT TO, DARE, NEED, USED TO as auxiliaries. Since the first three verbs share certain common characteristics (presence of the inflectional morpheme {s} for the thirdperson singular, existence of more than two finite forms, existence of non-finite forms, purely grammatical function) they are treated as primary auxiliary verbs, and the remaining ones as modal auxiliaries. *SHALL* and *WILL* can also be used purely grammatically.

The comparison of the verb constructions of English and Ruthenian shows that there is only one primary auxiliary in the Ruthenian language – *БУЦ*. The maximum number of the forms of the primary auxiliaries in the English verb constructions is three, whereas the maximum number of the forms of *БУЦ* in the Ruthenian verb constructions is two.

With regard to syntactic behavior the English language modal auxiliaries make a special group. As far as the Ruthenian modals are concerned it can be said that the Ruthenian language has only one modal auxiliary – *БИ*. The remaining Ruthenian equivalents to the English modals are included in the group of lexical verbs in the Ruthenian language.

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